

Distance Learning at the Cleveland Museum of Art

Tomb Culture of Ancient China
Grades 7-12

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Teacher note:

Each student will need a copy of the timeline template (page 5) and a pencil or pen for an interactivity during the videoconference.

TOMB CULTURE OF ANCIENT CHINA

Grades 7-12

Teacher Information Guide

Program Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the concept of the afterlife and explain why tombs were repositories for valued objects.
2. Students will be able to identify various periods of Chinese history, such as the Shang and Tang Dynasties
3. Students will be able to identify several types of materials and techniques used by ancient Chinese artisans to construct useful objects and grave goods.
4. Students will be able to discuss the continuity of Chinese tomb culture over several centuries.

Program Description:

In this program, students will be introduced to selected objects found in ancient Chinese tombs as a way of surveying history from the late Neolithic (3,000 BC) era to the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). These objects reveal the contents of ancient tombs and shed light on similar types of items used for daily life. In addition, these tomb goods—ritual vessels, figurines, and musical instruments—represent exemplary workmanship in jade, bronze, and ceramics. Working methods with these materials are also explored.

National Education Standards:

For Fine Arts – Visual Arts (grades 7-12):

- Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques, and Processes
- Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
- Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Cultures
- Making Connections Between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines

For Language Arts – English (grades 7-12):

- Communication Skills
- Communication Strategies
- Applying Knowledge
- Multicultural Understanding
- Applying Non-English Perspectives

For Social Science (grades 7-12):

- Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires 1000 BC-300 AD
- Era 4: Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter, 300-1000 AD

For Language Arts – Foreign Languages (grades K-12)

- Communication
- Cultures
- Comparisons

Prior to the Program

Historical/Geographical Background:

Students should be familiar with various geographical locations in China and understand that its history extends several thousand years into the past. Completing one of the following activities may assist in this goal.

Group Presentations

Divide students into small groups of 4-5 people. Each group should select a topic and read the corresponding article from these URLs listed below and prepare a report to the class on what they have learned in reading the material.

1. **Archaeology of Shang and Zhou Dynasty** http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shzh/hd_shzh.htm
2. **Late Prehistoric China** http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_pt1.shtm
3. **Pottery** http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_pot.shtm
4. **Jade** http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_jad.shtm
5. **The Tomb of the First Emperor** http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_emp.shtm

Members could pair up or assume individual roles within their group to facilitate preparing their report.

- Researcher (responsible for taking notes based on their reading assignment)
- Graphic Designer (responsible for visual presentation of material - a poster or short power point presentation of 5 slides)
- Presenters (responsible for making the oral presentation to the class)

Bio Poem or Fibonacci Poem

For each student, print out one copy of the project description and topic idea list (page 4), and one of the three formats (pages 5, 6, or 7). You may choose one format of poem for the entire class, or mix them up as you choose – the bio poems may be more interesting to younger students, and the Fibonacci format more exciting and flexible for high school students. Since the goal is to enhance the students' background knowledge of China, ensure that each student chooses a different topic and that the poems are either displayed for a time, or read aloud.

Tomb Culture of Ancient China: *pre-videoconference research activity*

You are going to research a topic related to Chinese history or culture. Rather than writing a traditional report, you are going to write a poem.

Choosing a subject: Think about a question you have or a topic that interests you. The list below may provide some inspiration, but don't feel limited by it! You have much leeway as to topic. Be sure to get your chosen topic approved by your teacher before you begin your research.

Possible topics:

Oracle bones	Chinese terra cotta warriors	China in the Neolithic Era
Jade artifacts	Chinese territories	Shang Dynasty (1523–1028 BC)
Terra cotta vessels	Chinese values	Zhou Dynasty (1045–256 BC)
Chinese writing	Chinese zoos	Ch'in (Qin) Dynasty (221–206 BC)
Chinese New Year	Chinese education system	Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD)
China airlines	Famous Chinese person	Six Dynasties (220–586 AD)
China earthquake	Famous Chinese tombs	Sui Dynasty (581–618 AD)
Chinese zodiac	Famous Chinese landmarks	T'ang Dynasty (618–906 AD)
Chinese birth chart	Chinese history	Five Dynasties (907–960 AD)
Chinese calendar	China geography	Sung Dynasty (960–1279 AD)
Chinese terrace farming	Chinese language	Yuan Dynasty (1280–1365 AD)

Conducting your research: Consider both web and print resources to gather information for your poem. Your library likely has many books or periodicals (such as National Geographic) that can help you. Below are some web articles to help get you started.

Shang & Zhou Dynasties: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shzh/hd_shzh.htm

The Tomb of the First Emperor: http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_emp.shtm

Late Prehistoric China: http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_pt1.shtm

Bronze Age China: http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_pt2.shtm

Pottery: http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_pot.shtm

Jade: http://www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_jad.shtm

Writing your poem: Please use the poem format described on the separate page you received with this one. You are welcome to modify the format slightly to fit your material – the most important thing is to be creative! Be prepared to share your research poem with the rest of the class. You may also choose a photograph or draw a picture to accompany your poem.

Tomb Culture of Ancient China: *pre-videoconference research activity*

Bio Poem Format 1: Write your poem directly on this page. Remember, a bio poem doesn't have to rhyme, or even be about a person!

Title _____

Line 1 • (First name) _____

Line 2 • (Four traits to describe line 1) _____

Line 3 • Related to (or, Sibling of) _____

Line 4 • Who cares about _____

Line 5 • Who feels _____

Line 6 • Who needs _____

Line 7 • Who gives _____

Line 8 • Who fears _____

Line 9 • Who would like to see _____

Line 10 • Resident of _____

Line 11 • (Last name) _____

Student's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Tomb Culture of Ancient China: *pre-videoconference research activity*

Bio Poem Format 2: Write your poem directly on this page. Remember, a bio poem doesn't have to rhyme, or even be about a person!

Title _____

Line 1 • (First name only) _____

Line 2 • (Four adjectives that describe the person/object/concept) _____

Line 3 • Brother/Sister or Son/Daughter of _____

Line 4 • Lover of (3 people, places, or things) _____

Line 5 • Who feels (3 things) _____

Line 6 • Who needs (3 things) _____

Line 7 • Who gives (3 things) _____

Line 8 • Who fears (3 things) _____

Line 9 • Who would like to (3 things) _____

Line 10 • Resident of (city/state/province/country) _____

Line 11 • (Last name only) _____

Student's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Tomb Culture of Ancient China: *pre-videoconference research activity*

Fibonacci Poems: Choose format 1 or 2. Write your poem on a separate page of paper, or use a computer and print it out. Make sure you put down your name and the date, and supply a title for your poem. Your poem does not necessarily have to rhyme.

Fibonacci Poem • Format 1

Line 1 - one syllable.
Line 2 - 2 syllables.
Line 3 - 3 syllables.
Line 4 - 5 syllables.
Line 5 - 8 syllables.
Line 6 - 13 syllables.
Line 7 - 21 syllables.
Line 8 - 34 syllables.
Line 9 - 55 syllables.
Line 10 - 89 syllables.
Line 11 - 144 syllables, and so on, according to the Fibonacci sequence of numbers.

Fibonacci Poem • Format 2

Line 1 - one word.
Line 2 - 2 words.
Line 3 - 3 words.
Line 4 - 5 words.
Line 5 - 8 words.
Line 6 - 13 words.
Line 7 - 21 words.
Line 8 - 34 words.
Line 9 - 55 words.
Line 10 - 89 words.
Line 11 - 144 words, and so on, according to the Fibonacci sequence of numbers.

Vocabulary:

Students should be acquainted with these terms. Brief knowledge of the timeframes and characteristics of the following Chinese dynasties is also helpful.

Ancestor – A deceased parent, grandparent, or other relative of a living person. Often a focal point of prayer and meditation.

Artifact – An object produced by human craft such as a tool, weapon, or ornament of archaeological or historical interest.

Dynasty – A succession of rulers from the same family. Beginning with the Shang dynasty, historical eras in China are named after the ruling family or clan.

Jade – A hard stone that is often used for ornamental carvings and jewelry. The name is actually used to describe two different minerals, nephrite and jadeite. Both jadeite and nephrite are usually pale green or white, but jadeite can occasionally be other colors, such as pink, lavender, blue, and emerald green. Jadeite is more rare, and green jadeite is highly prized.

Neolithic – New Stone Age. A period in the development of human technology, beginning about 9500 BC in the Middle East. Considered the last part of the Stone Age.

Oracle Bone – Pieces of bone or other material bearing the answers to questions asked of a diviner, consulted chiefly during the late Shang Dynasty.

Terra Cotta – "Baked Earth" in Italian. The term usually refers to clay-based, unglazed ceramic pieces, but also can refer to glazed pieces made from this brownish-orange clay.

Historical Periods of China:

Neolithic Era (c. 10,000–1500 BC)

Shang Dynasty (1523–1028 BC) – The second Chinese dynasty; engaged in large-scale production of bronze-ware vessels, and weapons.

Zhou Dynasty (1045–256 BC) – Longest-lasting dynasty. The zenith of Chinese bronzeware making. Also spelled “Chou”.

Ch'in (Qin) Dynasty (221–206 BC)

Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) – Second imperial dynasty. The "Golden Age" in Chinese history.

Six Dynasties (220–586 AD)

Sui Dynasty (581–618 AD)

T'ang Dynasty (618–906 AD) – Chinese period of progress and stability; greatest age for Chinese poetry.

Five Dynasties (907–960 AD)

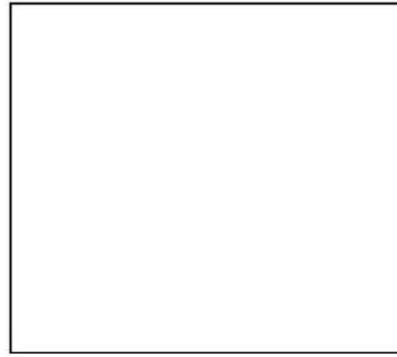
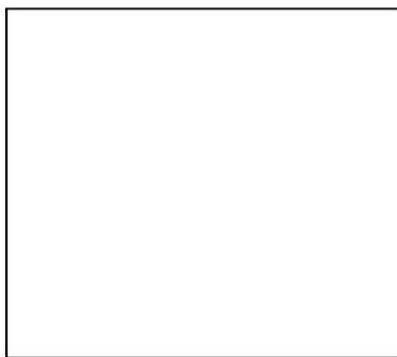
Sung Dynasty (960–1279 AD)

Yuan Dynasty (1280–1365 AD)

Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 AD) – Dynasty of flourishing arts: painting, poetry, music, literature, and dramatic theater.

Ch'ing Dynasty (1644–1912 AD)

Tomb culture of ancient China timeline

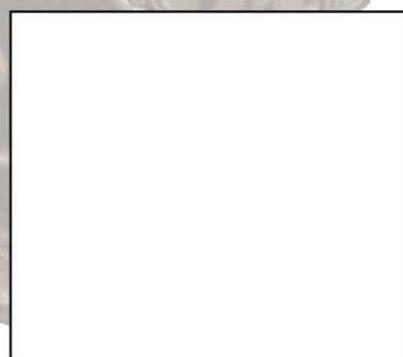
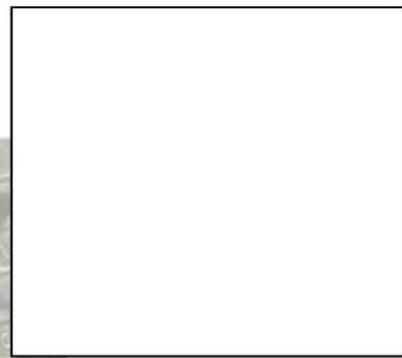


B.C.

B.C.

B.C.

B.C.



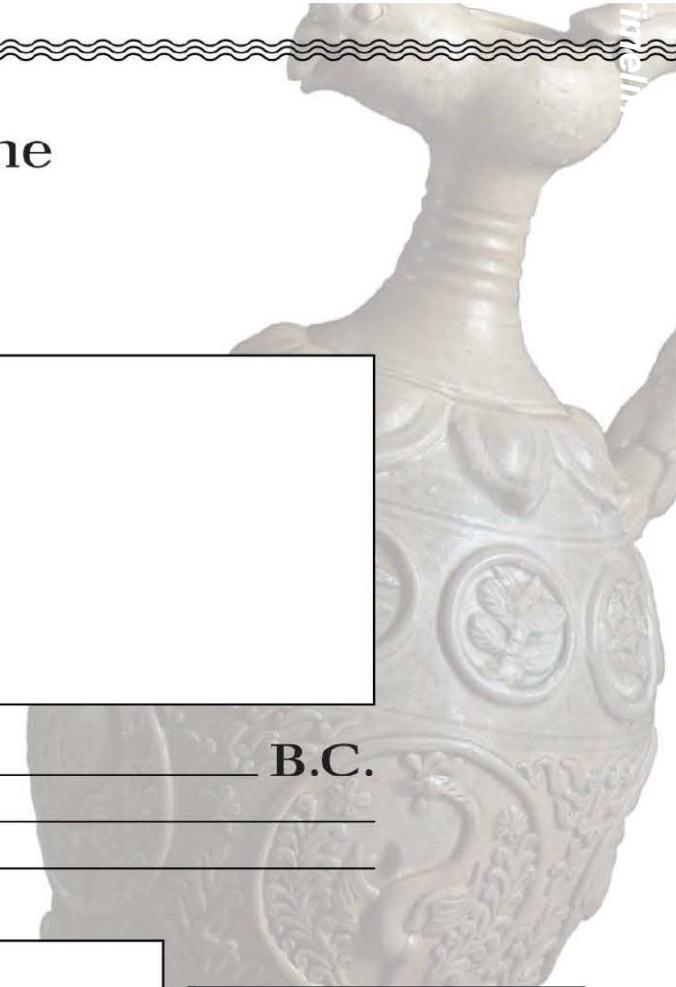
A.D. _____

A.D. _____

A.D. _____

A.D. _____

name _____ date _____



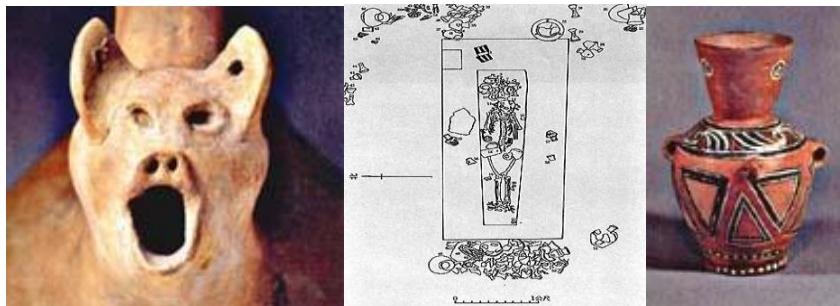
Beyond the Program

Teaching Extensions: Language Arts/Social Studies/Visual Arts

Writing About Art: Working in groups of four or fewer, assign different groups a tomb from the list below to research. Study and research the artifacts of the assigned tombs to answer these questions in a paragraph or more:

1. Using the artifacts from the tombs, what can you learn about these royal figures?
2. Select two or three pottery or bronze objects and describe how they would be used.
3. How do these artifacts reflect the cultural beliefs towards death?
4. Describe any evidence of technological advances (or differences) between two tombs.
5. What are some limitations in making conclusions strictly from these tombs alone?

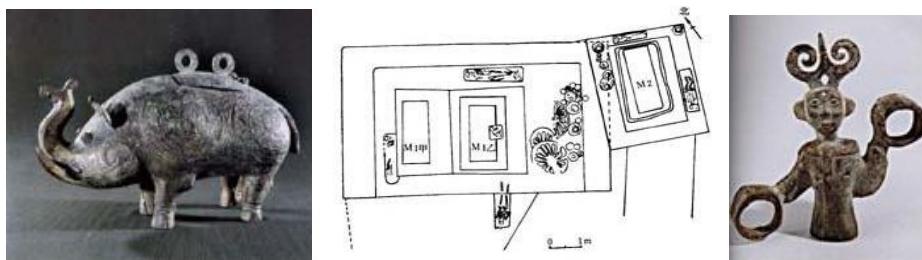
Neolithic Tomb at Dawenkou - 2300 BC



Shang Tomb of Fu Hao - 1200 BC



Western Zhou of the Count of Yu - 1000 BC

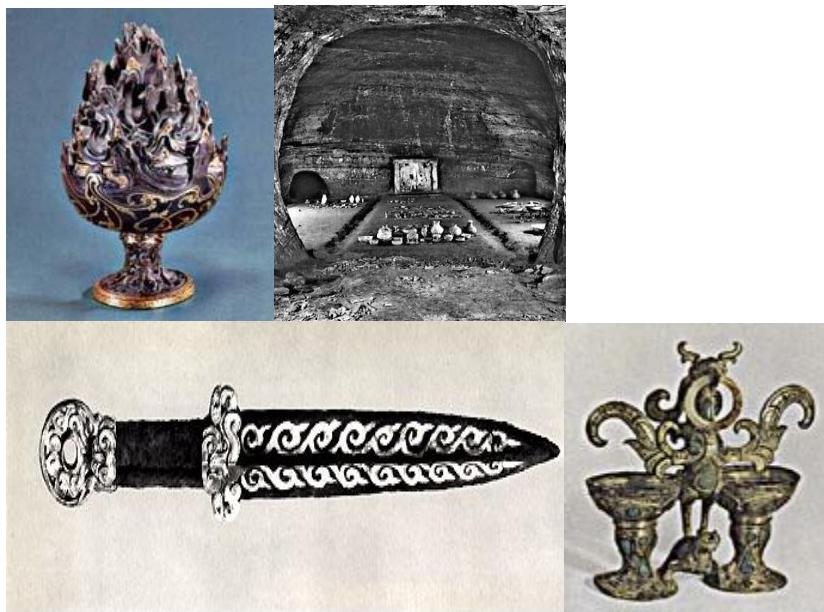




Eastern Zhou of the Marquis Yi - 433 BC



Han Tomb of Liu Sheng - 113 BC



Tomb Culture of Ancient China: *multiple-choice quiz*

1. How did the ancient Chinese usually prepare their dead for the afterlife?

- A. Mummifying the body
- B. Burying the deceased with items they would need in the afterlife
- C. Distributing all of the deceased's belongings to the poor
- D. Sacrificing animals to please the gods

2. Which of these major religions has had significant impact on Chinese culture for over 2000 years?

- A. Christianity
- B. Hinduism
- C. Buddhism
- D. Islam

3. In Ancient China, the rights and privileges of the rulers and nobles were protected by very specific rules. According to the *Book of Later Han*, who was allowed to be buried in a jade suit?

- A. No one but emperors
- B. Emperors, princes & princesses, dukes, and marquises
- C. All aristocrats and other notable persons, but certain kinds of thread were prescribed for each rank
- D. Anyone who had enough money

4. The ancient Chinese believed spirits would watch over them in life and intercede for them with the gods. What spirits were these?

- A. Deceased ancestors
- B. The sun and moon
- C. Venerated cows
- D. Dragons

5. Which of the following is *not* a characteristic of jade?

- A. Tough but brittle
- B. Always completely opaque
- C. Difficult to cut
- D. Greenish hue

6. What was the purpose of *bi* disks?

- A. Burial object
- B. Symbol of sky/heaven
- C. Changeable and not known for certain
- D. All of the above

Tomb culture of ancient China

materials activity sheet

				
stone	ceramic	jade	bronze	
APPEARANCE What does the material look like?				
USE What did the ancient Chinese make out of it?				
PROCESS What methods did they use to shape it?				
VALUE Did the material hold any intrinsic value or meaning for the ancient Chinese? If so, what was it?				

name _____ date _____

Additional Resources:

Asia For Educators <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/to4000bce.htm#neo>

In-depth website from Columbia University. Especially useful for this videoconference is the *China: History/Archeology* portion of the site.

Discovery <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/greatwall/>

Lesson plan for grades 6-8 about the Great Wall of China.

Credits:

The research poem activities were suggested by Deborah Schmeck, a creative and helpful teacher at the Schuylkill Valley Middle School in Leesport, Pennsylvania. Ms. Schmeck cites the following source as inspiring the Fibonacci poem format:

<http://www.reading.org/publications/journals/rt/v63/i6/abstracts/RT-63-6-Bintz.html>

Quiz answers:

1. B, 2. C, 3. C, 4. A, 5. C, 6. D.